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SUBJECT: NEW STEWARDS OF INDIAN DEFENSE RESEARCH MAY BE GOOD NEWS
FOR COLLABORATION

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Recent changes in Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) leadership may herald opportunities for increased productivity in defense research and collaboration with India. Dr. Vijay Kumar Saraswat was appointed on 1 September to the post of Scientific Advisor to the Defense Minister and head of DRDO. Mr. Gopal Bhushan, appointed by Dr. Saraswat in November to be DRDO's Director of International Cooperation, has a history of forward-looking cooperation with the U.S. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Dr. Saraswat has spent his entire career in DRDO and has a distinguished record of scientific achievement. Born in 1949, Dr. Saraswat earned an MTech from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore, and obtained a Doctorate in Propulsion Engineering from Osmania University. He started his career at DRDO in 1972 at the Defense Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) with development of India's first Liquid Propulsion Engine, codenamed DEVIL. He also held the position of Director, Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad, where he conceptualized and established facilities for development of micro and nano sensors for future avionics. From November 2005 until September 2009, Dr. Saraswat was in the position of "Distinguished Scientist and Chief Controller Research and Development (Missiles and Strategic Systems)," where he spearheaded a sophisticated Air Defense Program encompassing development of complex anti ballistic missile systems, radars, C-41 systems and integration of battle management resources into a national authority. Dr Saraswat is fellow of the National Academy of Engineering, Aeronautical Society of India, Astronautical Society of India, and Institution of Engineers. He is a member of the governing council of the Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER) and member of the Board of Research of AICTE, CSIR labs, and the board of studies of Osmania University. He is Chairman, Combustion Institute (Indian Section), and Aeronautical Society of India (Hyderabad Branch). He has received numerous awards, including DRDO Scientist of the Year Award (1987), National Aeronautical Prize (1993), DRDO Technology Transfer Award (1996) and Performance Excellence Award (1999), and Padma Shri (1998).

¶3. (SBU) DRDO's new Director of International Cooperation, Mr. Gopal Bhushan, has significant international experience working with both the U.S. and Israel. Prior to this appointment, Bhushan was the Defense Technology Advisor at the Indian Embassy in Washington, DC from July 2006 to October 2009 (Note: He held the rank of

Counselor. End Note.) An article from a December 2009 DRDO publication notes that "[h]is efforts [in DC] have helped forging [sic] of cooperative R&D partnerships and increased the accessibility of DRDO scientists to the sensitive laboratories and facilities of U.S. DoD and DOE". Bhushan was also Staff Officer to the Scientific Advisor to the Defense Minister from May 2000 to July 2006, where he held, for four years, the position of Co-Secretary of the Indo-Israel Management Council, an Apex Body between DRDO and the Israeli Ministry of Defense Directorate of Defense Research & Development. In a career of over two decades with DRDO, he has also worked at the DRDO Computer Center, Directorate of Advanced Computing and Systems Analyses at DRDO HQ, and the Institute of Systems Studies & Analyses. He is married to Mrs. Bharti Gopal.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: After Dr. Saraswat's appointment, there was a marked slowing in decisions flowing from DRDO regarding U.S.-DOD/DRDO collaboration; an Embassy contact at DRDO's International Cooperation office inferred that Dr. Saraswat had caused the slowdown. Although Dr. Saraswat initially appeared cool towards U.S.-India interaction, he may have been simply getting his arms around the overall program. His appointment of Mr. Bhushan could indicate DRDO plans to strengthen U.S.-India collaboration on defense S&T. During his time as DRDO Advisor in DC, Mr. Bhushan was an aggressive advocate for U.S.-India S&T/R&D collaboration, became very familiar with the U.S. process, and established relationships with many key U.S. S&T personalities. Based on recent conversations with DRDO officers, post anticipates increased pressure from DRDO on issues such as the entity list, visa processing times for DRDO scientists, and Technical Assistance Agreements (TAA), as well as positive movement on project agreements (PA) with U.S. defense research laboratories. END COMMENT

NEW DELHI 00000017 002 OF 002

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